

Nationwide Push for Smart Prepaid Meters to Boost Distribution Efficiency and Better Consumer Services

97% of the 20.33 crore Smart Meters sanctioned under RDSS to be in Prepaid Mode

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A total of 4.93 Cr smart meters have been installed across the country with 1.6 Cr smart meters functioning in prepaid mode. Under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), smart metering works for 19.79 cr consumers in prepaid mode, 2.11 lakh feeders and 52.53 lakh DTs, totaling 20.33 Cr smart meters, have been sanctioned based on the proposal submitted by the States/distribution utilities and 3.58 Cr smart meters have been installed. The balance smart meters have been installed by States under their State plans/ other schemes.

Post paid service has traditionally been the default mode. However, considering the benefits offered to both consumers and distribution utilities, deployment of smart prepaid meters has been undertaken under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). The installation of prepaid smart meters is being prioritised for Government establishments, commercial, industrial and high-load consumers and subsequently for other consumers based on demonstration of benefits.

The following benefits have been envisaged for consumers:

- i. Convenience of recharge with small recharges
- ii. Emergency credit in meter to avoid disconnection on zero balance
- iii. Tracking of consumption
- iv. Error free billing

Besides the consumers, prepaid smart metering helps improve the billing and collection efficiency of the Distribution Utility while providing benefits like Automatic Energy accounting, improved Load forecasting, use of data analytics for demand side management and facilitate an enabling ecosystem for energy transition. The benefits, accruing to the distribution utilities, eventually gets passed on to the consumers in the form of better services and lower costs.

Initially, there were some challenges in the implementation of smart metering works due to inadequate consumer awareness regarding the benefits of smart meters. To improve consumer engagement and enhance confidence, the Ministry has issued various advisories/Standard operating Procedures (SoPs). These include:

- Incentivising consumers for prepaid meter installation through rebate in bill;
- No penalty on consumer based on maximum demand recorded by smart meter;
- Mechanism for recovery of past arrears in easy instalments;

- Installation of check meters for enhancing confidence in accuracy of smart meters.
- Smart meter mobile apps are being made available to allow for regular tracking of consumption of electricity and for easy recharge;
- Advance alerts for balance and emergency credit to consumers

This Information was given by the Minister of Power, Shri Manohar Lal, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

NR/MD

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